



Learn to write the easy way!

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Write Rules: Learn to write the easy way.

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Part 1 – Background

Write Rules: Learn to write the easy way.

What is Write Rules?

Write Rules is a song and movement based programme designed to make learning to write fun. It aims to teach children how to write their letters correctly without them even realising it.

The Write Rules songs give children specific movement rules they can use to help them to know where to start their letters and to help with orientation. The lesson plans include whole body and fine motor movements and visual perception activities to help with writing readiness. As children progress, it teaches them how to correctly form, size and space their letters. The practice worksheets include common phonics sounds (taken from UK National Curriculum statutory lists) to help to reinforce correct letter formations when writing words and sentences.

Write Rules core principles

- 1) Children should be taught printing first¹.
- 2) Children will be taught handwriting as a separate skill to phonics.
- 3) Children will be taught letters in formation patterns, or families (e.g. r n m taught together).

Why we do it this way?

After many years supporting children with poor handwriting skills, Kim identified three common characteristics in children who struggle with their writing. The first was they often started their letters in the incorrect position. This can reduce writing fluency and add to letter orientation confusion.

Secondly, they frequently segmented their letters. Segmentation means that draw letters in parts, rather than in one continuous motion. For example, they might draw the body of an 'r' then go back and add the little bit on the top left. This also reduces writing fluency and speed. It can sometimes make writing difficult to read.

Finally, children often had very poor sizing and placement of letters on the line. So, their 'j' might sit up on the line rather than go underneath it. Or, their 's' and their 'h' might be the same size and often they would omit spaces between words. These errors make writing more difficult to read in the long term.

Kim reflected on her motivation and goal for creating Write Rules. Her goal is to teach children how to avoid these errors at the beginning. She wants to help all children to understanding the correct

¹ This is in line with the recommendations from the DfE (Note 3 of the DfE phonics guidance <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/phonics-teaching-materials-core-criteria-and-self-assessment/validation-of-systematic-synthetic-phonics-programmes-supporting-documentation>)

letter formations and patterns from the moment they pick up their pencil. If they can get it right from the start, then they won't need to unlearn incorrect patterns with the help of an occupational therapist. At the end of the day, she would like to see far less referrals for poor handwriting.

What's different about Write Rules?

Whilst most other writing programmes include songs or rhymes, fine motor skills and worksheets, they do not specifically link the instructions to the motor movements required to make letters. Some programmes focus on capitals first, and do not have a clear focus for lower case letters. Other programmes link their handwriting to phonics.

For example, the phonics programme *Read Write Inc* (date) uses rhymes such as 'slither down the snake'. This is excellent alliteration to help a child remember their phonics. However, unless the child's visual representation of snake looks like the letter 's', or Figure A, this rhyme is unhelpful when they are writing.

If their visual representation of the letter 's' looks like Figure B, their 's' will be reversed. If they visualise a snake which looks like Figure C, this will not help them to draw the letter 's'! The alliteration rhyme only supports writing, if the child has a correct visual representation in their head of what an 's' looks like when they think about *slithering down the snake* (Figure A).



Figure A



Figure B



Figure C

Write Rules is a **motor first approach** to handwriting. It starts with the initial skills required, like postural awareness, pencil grasp and control. There is ongoing reinforcement of these skills throughout the programme. When it is time to write letters, there is **clear focus on formation patterns which clearly link to the actual movements** children need to make with their pencil. Songs, stories and games are used to help to reinforce the rules.

Skill Development

Gross motor skill development

Gross motor skills refer to the larger movements our body makes, like walking and kicking a ball. Gross motor skill development, particularly postural control, is essential for fine motor skill development. To understand the development of gross motor skills and postural control, it is highly recommended that you watch the first section of videos in the Introduction to Fine Motor Skills training. This explores the development of postural control, postural stability and why gross motor skills are essential for fine motor skill development.

Fine motor skill development

The development of fine motor skills is quite complex. These are covered in the Introduction to Fine Motor skills training. There are videos which explore the concepts below.

Fine motor topics covered in training

- Grasp development
- Bilateral integration
- Hand eye coordination
- Pencil grasp development and pencil grips
- Pre-writing skills
- Pencil control

Fine motor skills are obviously required to hold a pencil and this is why they are integral to learning handwriting. Each week within the write rules programme, there are suggested fine motor activities which you can include. They activities focus on supporting finger control and isolation.

Visual perception

Visual perception is the brain's ability to understand what it is seeing. It is different to visual acuity, which is the clarity of the object you are seeing. Visual acuity comes from the lens of the eye, whereas visual perception is what the brain does with that image once it has seen it. There is a short video on visual perception in Introduction to Fine Motor Skills training.

There are different components of visual perception. These include

- Discrimination: the ability to match identical items - e.g. to circle the letter 'b' each time on a page.
- Figure ground: the ability to find items in a contrasting background e.g. locating the 'b' within other letters or in a picture.
- Form constancy: the understanding that an object can change size or the way that it looks but it's still the object e.g. a b is still a b regardless of the font it's written in (b b b).
- Visual closure: the ability to identify an object when you can only see part of it – e.g. if the b was partially covered in a word you could guess it might be a b.
- Spatial relations: the ability to identify the direction of the object and its relationship to other objects – e.g. identifying b isn't d, and also seeing that 'd' is a 'vertically flipped b' and 'p' is a 'horizontally flipped b'.
- Visual memory: is the ability to remember what you're seeing. So when a child copies a 'b' from the board, they have to remember what they saw.
- Visual sequential memory: is the ability to remember information in order – e.g. if the child has to write a word, they need to remember the letters in sequence e.g. bubble.
- Visual motor integration: is the ability to combine both visual perception skills and motor skills. Writing is a visual motor skill. This will be explored below when we compare writing to reading.

Visual perception is an integral skill for writing. Children need to be able to visually discriminate and remember letters in order to copy them. Tracing over letters does not require strong visual

perception skills. However, to write letters (and then words) from memory, the child needs to have established their visual perception skills.

Language development

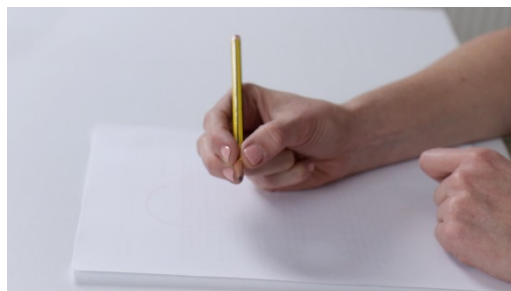
Because reading and subsequently writing is sound and word based there is a huge language component to success with both. Poor spoken language can impact a child's writing, as the organisation of words on the paper requires language skills! Reduced language understanding impacts on a child's ability to comprehend what they are reading. Reduced hearing can lead to difficulty distinguishing between and learning phonics sounds. Poor language skills can also impact a child's ability to remember shapes and letter names and sounds. If language skill delays are identified, referral to a speech and language therapist is highly recommended.

Writing Skills

Functional and mature pencil grasps

The training covers pencil grasp development, this is a quick summary of functional pencil grasps. This content is copied with permissions from Kim's book Supporting Pencil Grasp Development. There are four grasps which are identified in the literature as mature.

Tripods – dynamic



Most text books suggest that the optimal pencil grasp is what is called a dynamic tripod grasp. The dynamic tripod grasp, as mentioned earlier, is when a child holds their pencil with their index and middle fingers and thumb. The pencil movement should come from the fingers, resulting in dynamic control or a dynamic tripod.

Quadruped – dynamic



There is research which shows that a dynamic quadruped grasp is as effective as a dynamic tripod grasp. In a quadruped grasp the child holds the pencil with their thumb, index, middle and ring fingers on the pencil, with the little finger tucked away. It is important that the child is still holding the pencil with the tips of their fingers, rather than their thumb being wrapped around. By the age of seven, the pencil movement should also come from the fingers rather than the wrist.

Middle finger control



You may also see children with a tripod or quadruped grasp that control the pencil with their middle finger. Usually this is ok, as long as they have kept their web-space open and the movement is coming from their fingers.

Modified or alternative tripod



Another grasp that is less well known but highly effective for the children who can adapt to it, is the modified or alternative tripod grasp. For this grasp the child needs to put the pencil between their index and middle fingers and then curl these fingers and their thumb around onto the pencil. This feels very strange when you first try it. However, it takes the weight of the pencil, so for children with low tone it can be a good option. It also secures the pencil, so, if you let go the pencil, for the most part, stays in place. Whilst this grip does look and feel quite strange, it is a good alternative as it means the child can use it on any pen or pencil, rather than needing to remember and or find a pencil grip. It can also be particularly effective for children who use a thumb wrap grasp if they are able to change to it.

Pre-Writing Shapes

Pre-writing shapes are the lines and shapes a child needs to be able to draw prior to learning to write. They are the shapes which form letters, such as straight and curved lines. Pre-writing shapes include the directional movements a child needs to make to be successful with writing.

They include the directional movements of horizontal, vertical and diagonal lines and curves. Shapes like the vertical (+) and oblique (x) cross teach a child to intersect lines. Squares and triangles teach the concept of drawing corners. The ability to both intersect lines and draw corners, are important developmental steps.

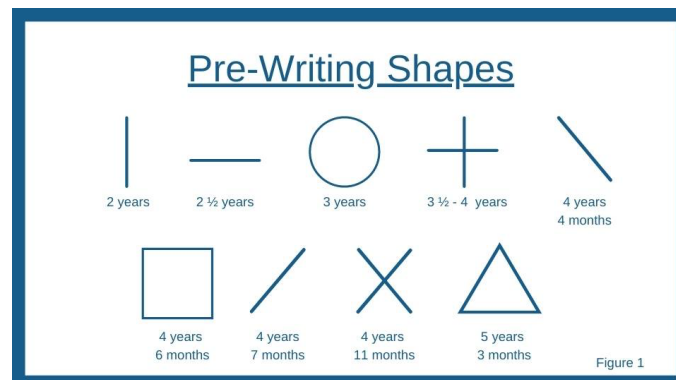


Figure 1

Figure 1 shows the shapes, along with the average age children learn to draw them. The average age is that age at which 50% of children will be able to draw the shape, so half of children will be slower than the ages given.

Left handers - a note on oblique lines

When working with left handers, the oblique line order switches. It is easier for left-handers to draw the oblique line to the right (\) rather than to the left. This is because when drawing to the right they can see the end point, or where they have to take their pencil. When drawing to the left (/) they have to visually imagine where to take their pencil as their hand is in the way.

Learning to draw the shapes

Imitating pre-writing shapes

The term 'imitate' means that the child imitates movements that they have seen directly after seeing them, or whilst looking. So, the adult draws the shape before and with the child so that they can watch and imitate the movements. This is easier for the child as they don't have to plan (or remember) the movement required.

Worksheets are a form of imitation as well as they provide a template for the child to work from. Some children may also need to watch the adult first to understand what to do on the worksheet. It is helpful to keep the same movements on the same sheet so to help with reinforcement. So, straight lines on one sheet and curved on the next.

Recognising and matching shapes

Being able to visually recognise and match pre-writing shapes is an important step to being able to draw them. It is impossible to draw something that you don't have a visual representation of. For example, could you draw a saola? My guess is that most readers have not heard of a saola before and therefore won't know what to draw.

However, if you [follow this link](#) to see what a saola is, then you would be able to copy it. It's the same for children learning to draw shapes. If they don't know what a triangle is, they will struggle to draw it. Recognition and matching relies heavily on visual perception skills. Naming shapes requires good language skills!

Copying pre-writing shapes

Once a child can imitate a shape, the next step is copying it. Copying means they can look at a pre-drawn version of it and make their own, without any help from an adult. When copying, they need to have an understanding of how to plan their movements. This is much more difficult for children with [dyspraxia](#).

Drawing shapes independently

Finally the child will learn to draw the shapes independently. So, if you ask them to draw a triangle, they can do this without a prompt. To this they must understand the word triangle and already have a visual representation of the triangle in their mind. They need to be able to draw both oblique lines and have mastered corners. And they need to plan the movements to draw it. Letters and numbers are the same. The child needs to **know the name**, have a **visual representation** and a **movement plan**. Over time this becomes automatic.

Teaching Handwriting

Handwriting is a very complex skill! In order to be ready for writing, children need to have established reasonable motor, visual perception and language skills. These skills form the foundation for writing readiness. Without adequate postural control, a child will struggle to sit up at their desk. When fine motor skills are weak, the child can struggle with pencil grasp and control. If they have difficulty with visual perception skills, then they will struggle to identify and remember their letters. And, it's impossible to draw something you can't visually remember!

Write Rules has deliberately included activities to support motor skills and visual perception. It covers and reinforces pre-writing skills. There is no focus on language skills, but if the child needs support in this area then they should receive it. If there are specific concerns with language, then a referral to a speech and language therapist may be required. Write Rules is not designed to teach phonics, but does include phonics sounds to help with reinforcement of phonics concepts in handwriting.

Handwriting needs to be taught

Handwriting is a very specific man made activity. Unlike walking, running, eating and climbing it is not a skill humans are innately born with. It is a skill that requires specific instruction. Sassoon (1995) highlighted that 'unless the correct point of entry and direction of stroke for each letter is

taught, understood and used from the start, it is progressively difficult to alter the wrong movement pattern that is practised and becomes habitual.'

Incorrect formation patterns can make handwriting illegible. They can slow a child down as they won't automatically finish a letter on the right side to start the next. It also makes progressing to joined-up writing more difficult.

The policy guidance from the National Handwriting Association [NHA] (2019 p. 31) recommends that 'handwriting skills need to be taught both as a timetabled discrete subject and through ongoing reinforcement of skills in everyday written language activities.' They suggest that lessons should be focussed, short and at regular intervals, but will be influenced by the age of the children and the class profile. A daily session of ten minutes is recommended for young children learning letter formations. For older children, three sessions of 15 - 20 minutes per week may work better.

Moving from pre-writing to letters

Letters are made up of combinations of vertical, horizontal, oblique and curved shapes. An 'a', includes both a circle and a straight line. The letter 'x' is a combination of both oblique lines (/ \). Children who haven't mastered both of these lines often draw an 'x' with a vertical line and one slightly oblique line. So, it looks like a hybrid between a 't' and an 'x'.

The age where half of children can intersect both oblique lines to form an 'x' it is 4 years 11 months. This means that several capital letters and lower case letters 'k, v, w, x' are actually outside of the expected age norms for many children in the early years at school. Unfortunately, some education system learning targets (e.g., England) do not match these norms. In England, four-year-old children are expected to be competent at writing sentences.

Personal note: *The Write Rules lesson plans have been linked to the England National Curriculum. Kim is aware that these targets are incongruent to the developmental readiness for children. However, she has used them because she knows that teachers need to follow and meet these targets.*

Phonics vs writing

Phonics and writing require different skills. Phonics relies heavily on visual perception and language processing. The child needs to visually identify and then remember the sound or combination sounds when learning phonics.

The skills required for writing depend on what the child is writing. If they are tracing over copying work, they only need to rely on motor skills and motor planning. However, if they need to write their own ideas or write letters and words from memory, they also need to have a visual representation of the letters. Teaching in letter families can help to embed the visual representation and motor patterns required.

Part 2 – Write Rules Structure

Write Rules: Learn to write the easy way.

Write Rules core principles

Write Rules aims to teach children how to **write their letters correctly** without them even realising it. The programme includes songs, stories, games, movement activities and worksheets. These have been grouped into sixty weeks of lesson plans designed to cover the first two years of schooling.

Principle 1 – Children should be taught printing first

The National Handwriting Association², the Department of Education³ and Early Years Coalition⁴ and advocate for a printing first approach for young children. The reason for this is that they are not developmentally ready to start with joined letters due to the oblique lines required. As noted above, children don't master both oblique lines until they are at least five years old. Joins are also exceptionally hard for left handers to master at such a young age as they cannot see where their hand is making the joins. This makes their first experience of handwriting more difficult than it is already. Joins also make text much harder for some children to decipher when reading.

Kim has seen this first hand with one child who could not identify her letters correctly at six years of age because her school had used a joined/cursive first approach to writing. She couldn't identify the letters from the joins perceptually. Subsequently, she struggled to both read and write. When a print first approach was taken, she could identify her letters consistently for the first time.

Printing is much easier for children to learn, especially younger children. In the UK, four and five year olds are expected to write sentences, printing makes this target slightly more developmentally appropriate. Also, once children reach secondary they can choose their writing style and many switch back to printing. In the future, it is likely many more will switch to electronic recording as well.

Principle 2 – Children will be taught handwriting as a separate skill to phonics

As outlined in the background information, language processing and motor movements are two completely different skills. Phonics relies heavily on language processing and visual perception. Writing requires visual perception and motor skills. Whilst children do need to know their letter/sound names in order to functionally write, Kim advocates for separate handwriting and phonics lessons to give children to master handwriting as a motor skill.

² Developing a Handwriting Policy 2019

³ Systematic Synthetic Phonics Guidance 2021

⁴ Birth to Five Years Non-statutory guidance for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2021

Principle 3 – Children will be taught letters in formation patterns, or letter families

The primary goal of Write Rules is that children use correct letter formation patterns when writing. Teaching children their letters in letter families helps them reinforce correct formation patterns. It facilitates muscle memory and motor learning much more successfully than when letters are taught in phonics groups or alphabetically.

Letter families

What are letter families or formation pattern groups?

Letter families are groups of letters which are formed with similar motor movements. So, straight letters are grouped. Letters with a line and a curve are grouped, letters which have a 'c' as the start are grouped and oblique letters are grouped. Programmes will group letters slightly different depending on how they are drawn. For example, k may end up with the second letter family if it is drawn with a closed top.

Write Rules uses the following groupings

- ltijuy
- rnmhbp
- coadgqfse
- vwxyzk

Some programmes also group letters into families that are taller and those which go under the line. Write Rules reinforces these rules throughout the programme. In the Stage 2, there are also weeks specifically dedicated to sizing and placement of letters.

Why teach in letter families?

Grouping the letters into formation patterns makes sense from a motor learning perspective. Teaching letters in formation pattern groups, like letter families, helps children to reinforce motor patterns when they are writing. Practicing the same motor movements together can also help children with their orientation and formations.

When teaching in phonics groups, e.g. satpin, the letters motor patterns are so varied. There is no consistency. The letter 's' is also one of the hardest letters to write because of the direction changes required. (It is even harder when taught in joined/cursive first, there are seven direction changes and three oblique lines!). It might be fantastic to teach reading, but it is not the best approach to teach writing.

When teaching alphabetically, acdefg are from the same formation group, but formations are much harder than the letters 'l' and 't'. Teaching alphabetically also doesn't clearly separate the letters 'b' and 'd'. Many children confuse the orientation of these two, so separating them into families with rules can help children to remember how to write them.

Starting with the straight letters (l t i) makes sense developmentally for children's skills. Vertical and horizontal lines are the first lines children learn to draw. Another thing that starting with the letter 'l' does, is it gives children initial confidence in their handwriting. Most children can draw a vertical and horizontal line, but not all of them can draw their oblique lines when they arrive at school.

Kim reflected on the hundreds of children she has met throughout her twenty years as an occupational therapist. Many of these children were referred for poor handwriting. Most of these children had no confidence with their handwriting and really didn't enjoy it. They would say 'I can't write'. Kim would always challenge, 'I bet you can write the letter l'. A smile would usually come across the child's face, because they could! Even if 's' was far out of their reach, they usually make that little vertical line turn into an 'l'. This is why Kim always advocates for a letter family approach to teaching letters.

Start at the Top – teaching letter family one

The letters in letter family one are *ltijuy*.

These letters all start at the top. The first three are very easy to make. The main error that is seen on 'i' is often children draw a circle rather than a dot when writing the dot on top. This is reinforced in the song and stories.

Whilst 'u' and 'y' are harder than the others, they still start at the top and this is the best family grouping for them.

No Lifting – teaching letter family two

The letters in letter family two are *rnmhbp*.

The main rule here is 'no lifting'. Children should be encouraged to start at the top, like with letter family one. Then, they need to be encouraged to keep their pencil on the page, going down and up to make the letter. This is reinforced in the song, but teaching staff need to reinforce this rule in the classroom, especially for the letter 'b'.

Starts Like Curly 'C' – teaching letter family three

The letters in letter family three are *coadgqfse*.

This section of the songs is broken into two parts. The rule here is that all of the letters have a 'curly c'. Most of them 'start like curly c'. The letters 'f' and 's' have baby curly c at the start. The letter 'e' 'ends like curly c', which is why it is included here.

Let's Fall – teaching letter four

The letters in letter family four are **vwxzk**.

These letters all have oblique lines. Oblique lines are the last line children learn perceptually, which is why they have been put in as the last letter family.

Write Rules stages

Currently, Write Rules is broken into two stages. The first stage focusses on pencil control and learning correct lower case letter formations. The second stage revises lower case letter formations, covers capital letters and focusses on letter sizing and position. Each stage contains thirty weeks of activities, which can be completed across a school year.

Stage 1 targets

By the end of the year the child will

1. Hold their pencil using a tripod, modified tripod or quadruped grasp when colouring, drawing and writing.
2. Be able to write their name with correct letter formation patterns.
3. Start all lower case letters of the alphabet in the correct position when writing short sentences in their literacy book.

Stage 2 targets

By the end of the year the child will

1. Write all lower and uppercase letters with the correct orientation and letter formation pattern 90% of the time when writing in lessons.
2. Be able to identify and correct where they have made errors with their letter proportions and spacing in their work.

Stages 3+

Currently, the programme does not extend further than the first two stages. If there is positive feedback on the programme, then the next stages will cover pencil control for joins and joined up writing.

Schools could use Morrell Handwriting or Nelson Handwriting resources to teach children joined up letters. Write Rules will have given them a firm foundation to add in the exits and entrances.

Morrell's Handwriting information - <https://morrellshandwriting.co.uk/>

Nelson Handwriting information – Available through Oxford Owl <https://home.oxfordowl.co.uk/>

Write Rules resources

The programme includes both teacher and classroom resources. The teacher resources are designed to help teacher to run Write Rules. The classroom resources are designed to be used each week when running the programme. Classroom resources include activities to develop motor skills as well as handwriting.



Teacher resources

Overview document (this pdf)

This document gives a complete overview of Write Rules. Part one has provided a background. Part two provides a summary of the overall aims and content. Parts three and four outline the weekly targets and implementation for stages one and two in more depth.

Training videos

There are introductory videos which explain where the classroom resources are in the online platform and an example of how the weekly planners can be used. These are relevant for all staff using the programme. There are additional videos which give tips on how to do the fine motor programmes activities in the programme; these are particularly relevant for staff using Stage 1 (reception).

Write Rules includes access to GriffinOT's course 'Introduction to Fine Motor Skills'. This course explores postural control, grasp development and writing skills in much further depth than Part 1 of this document. It is recommended that all staff using Write Rules complete this training as it will enhance their knowledge and understanding. This includes classroom support staff like teaching assistants.

Weekly planners

Each week of the programme has a weekly planning sheet. This allows teachers to plan their lessons across the week. It should also allow for sufficient flexibility for it to be matched to the needs of students and the time that you have available for your handwriting lesson. There is a video which explain/s how you can use the weekly planners each week.

Embedding into the classroom

It is recommended that all staff reinforce the Write Rules concepts daily in the classroom. There are clear prompts within the songs (e.g. start at the top) which can be reinforced when children are writing. The prompts within Crocodile Snap (i.e. crocodile fingers) can also be used to help to remind children how to hold their pencil.

Differentiation

Write Rules is written to progress at the pace of the England national curriculum. It is acknowledged that the targets in this curriculum do not always match child development. And, that they are far too fast paced for some children, especially younger reception children and those with additional education needs.

Teachers can progress through Write Rules at the pace they feel is relevant for their class. For example in a special school, classes may take two years to progress through Stage 1. Or, in a mainstream school some children might repeat the previous week's work in a small group, or with their 1:1, to reinforce the concepts as required.

Classroom resources

Gross motor activities

This section of the programme contains gross motor, or whole body, movement activity videos for the children to complete. They could be completed as a whole class in the classroom, if you have space. Or, they can be included in the children's PE lessons if there is a screen in the hall. There are also specific activities to improve postural control, in the posture section of the fine motor training, for children who need a bit more help.

Fine motor activities

This section includes fine motor activities that will help with development of fine motor skills. Initially, there is a focus on isolation of the fingers for a tripod pencil grasp. Then, there is a shift to strength, endurance and control.

Initially in stage one (England reception), there are recommendations for day to day fine motor activities, like threading, posting coins and pegboards. These activities would be perfect for your fine motor activity table in the classroom. Some children may need extra help to access them correctly, but most children should be able to engage independently. In the second half of the year, there is a shift to videos that children can copy as a whole class.

In stage two (England Year 1), there are videos for children to watch and copy along with whilst they are seated at their desk or on the carpet. These include playdough activities (Dough Dance!), rice ball activities, a paper clip and tearing challenge.

Write Rules includes access to GriffinOT's larger fine motor programme (160+ activities). If you need more ideas for fine motor skill development, you can take relevant activities from this programme to include in your weekly schedule. These activities could also be used in small groups if there were specific children who needed extra help.

Songs

There are six songs which link included in Write Rules. They are:

- Crocodile snap – supports pencil grasp development
- Start at the top – for letter family one
- No lifting – letter family two
- Curly c part 1 – letter family three
- Curly c part 2 – letter family three
- Let's fall – letter family four

All songs have an animation for children to follow. The songs include whole body movements and directional movements. The rules in the songs are reinforced in the stories and games. It is recommended that classroom staff reinforce this rule when children are writing. The lyrics for the songs are in Appendix A.

Handwriting worksheets

Each week there are worksheets for the children to complete. Stage 1 starts with colouring and shapes, before moving onto letters. The weekly letter packs have a second side with either pencil control or visual perception (matching) activities. It is recommended this side is completed first. For some worksheets, there are also short videos giving the children instructions. These are indicated on the weekly planning sheet.

Stories and games

The stories and games reinforce the rules taught in each of the songs. Initially, they focus on matching identical letters and matching letters to their families. Then, they include spacing, proportions and position on the line. In Stage 2, there are also videos focusing on the use of punctuation when writing.

Materials required

Essential materials

These resources are **essential** to running the core parts of the programme

- Reliable internet connection
- Screen for children to view animations, watch stories and play games (ideally smart board)
- Space for children to stand and move/dance
- Writing instruments (markers, pencils, pens etc)
- Small crayons/pencils
- Playdough
- Rice balls: made from balloons (3 per ball) and rice
- Ability to print worksheets
- At least three handwriting lessons timetabled each week (daily is ideal)

Font

Fonts are included within the resources. These are the fonts which are used on all worksheets.

Using them is completely optional. They can be used by teachers to create additional handouts or resources in word processing programmes. Font installation on individual computers is ordinarily a simple process. However, in most schools it will likely **require administration permissions** and therefore need to be loaded by the IT team. An annual subscription to Write Rules includes the licence to the font.

Additional materials

There are additional fine motor activities which can help with pencil grasp and pencil control. It is expected that most reception classes would contain many of these items, but Year 1 and above classes may not. These are **not essential to running the programme** but will offer children more variety with fine motor activities in Stage 1 and 2. The Stage 1 resources may also be relevant for children in Stage 2 who need additional help with their fine motor skills.

Stage 1

- Paint
- Pegboards
- Puzzles (can make using printable sheets)
- Small pieces of dowel or counters, coins or pieces of sponge
- Duplo, OR, building blocks
- Coins and a money box
- Small sponges (can be made by cutting up a regular kitchen sponge)
- Threading beads and string (use a size the child can thread easily and pipe cleaners or washing line if the child is struggling to thread or to provide variety)
- Small plastic containers or bowls (to transfer water into) x2
- Coloured paper (and optional paper and glue)
- Medicine droppers (plastic)

Stage 2

- Large paperclips
- Small paperclips

Part 3 – Using Write Rules

Write Rules: Learn to write the easy way.

Getting Started

Familiarise yourself with the platform

When you first log in, you may find there is a lot of information to process. Go to the 'Getting Started with Write Rules' section. This contains the initial introduction and also a video which introduces the platform.



Familiarise yourself with the Write Rules resources

Start by having a listen to the songs! These will teach you the letter families and rules. Elements of these are included throughout the programme. Have a look at the fine motor and movement videos and also have a look at the stories and games. Download the worksheets as well.



Set aside time to do the training

As noted above, Write Rules includes access to GriffinOT's Introduction to Fine Motor Skills. It is highly recommended that you set aside time to complete this training. In total it will take 2.5 hours. The videos are short and you can progress through them at your own pace.



These videos explore the following concepts

- Development of postural control
- Development of grasps
- Development of pencil grasp and tips to help
- Pre-writing skills
- Development of writing skills (coming September 2022)
- Visual perception
- (Development of scissor skills)
- (Other fine motor skills)

Sourcing materials

It is hoped that schools already have majority of the essential resources, listed on page, required to run the programme.

- Rice balls will be the most obvious exception; these will need to be made (please see the instructional video).
- Playdough is a really helpful addition to the fine motor activities. It is expected this will need to be replenished each half term. Children will need at least 1/3 of a tub of shop brought dough. It could be homemade, but will need to be replenished more frequently.
- Stage 1 – having access to the non-essential resources will increase activity variety in terms one and two.
- Stage 2 – having access to large and small paperclips (at least 10 per child) will increase the activity variety in the second term.

Familiarise yourself with the weekly planner

The next sections will the weekly planner in more depth. Start by reviewing the first half term for the stage you are planning to run. This will prepare you for running Write Rules as the structure remains the same throughout.

Timetabling

Frequency

It is recommended that handwriting lessons are included in your timetable at least three times a week. You can do them every day! The gross and fine motor activities can also be scheduled into lessons like PE or art. The stories could be included at the start of a literacy lesson. In reception, the fine motor activities could be included on your choosing tables.

Structure of lessons

The structure of the lessons can be tailored to suit your school and your classroom. If you are going to do a full session, start with a gross motor activity and fine motor activity. Then, children listen to a song or story and can complete a worksheet.

If you are short of time, you could do handwriting every day but alternate fine and gross motor activities and stories during the week. It may be that you spend more time focussed on handwriting earlier in the school year to ensure children have learnt the foundation skills. The students in your class may also need to spend more time on specific concepts, so you can tailor the speed of the programme to them.

Assessment

There are assessment forms to track children's progress. It is acknowledge that most schools will already have their own assessment and tracking forms in place. The forms are there for those who need them.

It is recommended that children are reviewed at the start of the year and the end of each term in reception. This can help you to track progress and put in extra support if needed. A check at the start, middle and end of year is sufficient for year 1. However, you can also review handwriting each week in lessons and put additional support in where relevant.

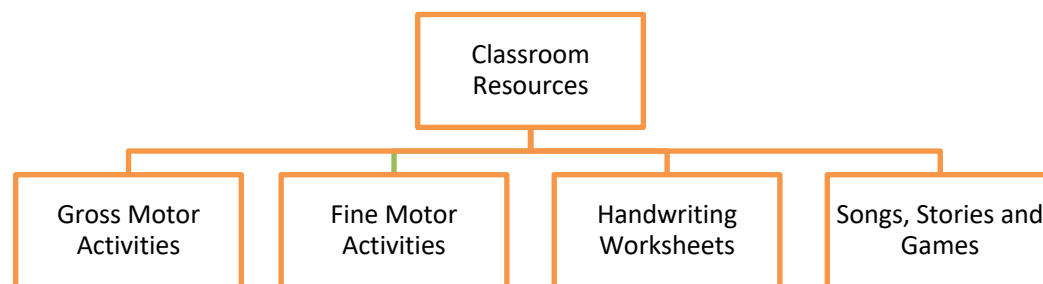
Weekly Planning

Weekly planner

The **weekly planner pages** are designed to help you do your weekly planning. These are in separate documents; there is one for each stage. You can identify which resources you will use on which days of that week. If your school has a specific planning format, you can also plan using that format.

Available resources

The following resources are available to include in your weekly lessons



Choosing resources

Each resource will take approximately five minutes to complete (e.g. each gross motor video is 3-5 minutes long). You can tailor each lesson to match with your class. The **weekly planner** is designed to help you quickly design your lessons.

The **weekly planner** lists the resources which are available to help to support the objective of the week. You can then choose the resources you plan to use each day. It has the references for where to find the resources and also which worksheets you should print out.

Factors that will determine what is included in your lessons include the time you have available and the level of ability of the children in your class. Some children may need to progress more slowly due to their level of ability. Other classes might be slower as they have less time to spend on using the resources. And, it's ok to repeat a week if you think your class needs to spend more time on the target.

There are 30 weeks of lesson plans for each stage. This allows time to exclude the first and last weeks of the school year. And, it also allows capacity to catch up or repeat content if needed. If you find you're using the resources in a completely different way, please email Kim to let her know as she is always looking to understand how the resources are being used and how she can make improvements to the programme.

Part 4 – Write Rules Stage 1

Write Rules: Learn to write the easy way.

Write Rules Stage 1 (UK Reception)⁵

Stage 1 of Write Rules allows children to form the foundations required for writing letters with the correct formations and placement. In the first twenty weeks children are taught the movements required for each letter. The final ten weeks focus on reinforcing the concepts learnt at the start of the school year.

The main aims of Stage 1 are for the child to learn to

1. Hold their pencil using a tripod, modified tripod or quadruped grasp when colouring, drawing and writing.
2. Be able to write their name with correct letter formation patterns.
3. Start all lower case letters of the alphabet in the correct position when writing short sentences in their literacy book.

Please see Appendix B to see how Write Rules links with the UK EYFS national curriculum targets.

Stage 1 Targets

Term	Weeks	Targets
1	1-5	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The child will experience colouring and drawing shapes with writing instruments. 2. The child will be able to identify which fingers should hold their pencil (crocodile fingers).
	6-10	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The child can identify that straight letters start at the top of the letter. 2. The child will be able to trace over litjuy using the correct formation patterns.
2	11-12	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The child will be able to trace over rnmhpb using the correct formation pattern. 2. The child will understand they need to keep their pencil on the paper (i.e. no lifting) when making these letters.
	13-17	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The child will be able to trace over coadgqsfe using the correct formation patterns. 2. The child can identify that these letters all 'start like curly c'.
	18-20	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The child will be able to trace over wvxzk using the correct formation patterns. 2. The child will be able to visually identify straight (- +) and oblique lines (\ / x).
3	21-30	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The child will be able to write their name with correct letter formation patterns. 2. The child will start all lower case letters of the alphabet in the correct position when writing short sentences.

⁵ In England, this stage is relevant for children in Reception, as the current reception targets require children to 'Write recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed.' In other countries, this stage may be relevant for later stages of schooling.

Stage 1 Weekly Focus

This table provides a summary of the weekly input. The **Stage 1 weekly planner** outlines the specific goals and resources required for each week of the programme.

Term 1	Term 2	Term 3
1. colouring	11. rnm	21. name
2. -	12. hbp	22. Itijuy
3. o rainbows	13. co	23. rnm
4. Crocodile Snap	14. ad	24. hbp
5. drawing	15. dg	25. coad
6. + square	16. qf	26. cogq
7. It	17. se	27. fse
8. ij	18. /\ x triangle	28. wvxzk
9. uy	19. wv	29. sentences
10. Itijuy	20. xzk	30. sentences

Stage 1 Term 1 Weekly Targets

Week 1: Colouring

Target: The child will colour in a picture using a writing instrument.

The focus of this week is to introduce children to crayons, pencils, paint and markers. Children should be provided with free opportunities to colour in the colouring sheets. These could be included in free choice activities or completed as a whole class. Children may want to colour the letter that matches the first letter of their name. Or, they might have a favourite picture they choose.

Teaching tip:

- It is highly recommended that the fine motor activities are also included through weeks 1-10.

Week 2: Vertical and horizontal lines

Target: The child will imitate vertical and horizontal lines.

The focus of this week is for children to imitate vertical and horizontal lines. These can be drawn with any writing instrument. It is recommended that large paper or an easel is available for children to stand at and make these shapes. It is highly recommended that the fine and gross motor activities are also included. There are optional vertical and horizontal curved lines as well.

Teaching tip:

- Vertical lines
 - Prompt the child to start at the top
 - Calling it 'standing line' can help to differentiate it from horizontal and oblique lines
- Horizontal lines

- Prompt the child to start on the right hand side and to go right across the page
- Calling it 'sleeping line' can help to differentiate from vertical and oblique lines

Week 3: Circles and rainbows

Target: The child will imitate circles and rainbows

The focus of this week is for children to draw round and curved shapes. These can be drawn with any writing instrument. It is recommended that large paper or an easel is available for children to stand at and make these shapes. It is highly recommended that the fine and gross motor activities are also included. There additional curved lines mazes as well.

Teaching tip:

- Circles – prompt the child to start at the top and go around to the left
- Rainbows – prompt the child to start on the right hand side and to go right across the page

Week 4: Crocodile Snap

Target: The child can identify their 'crocodile fingers' or their thumb, index and middle fingers from the other fingers of their hand.

The focus of this week is the song Crocodile Snap. It should be included every day. There are additional colouring sheets to reinforce the concepts. The letter colouring sheets and dinosaur dot sheets from week one can also be used as resources.

Teaching tip:

- Use the term 'crocodile fingers' if you see children holding their writing instruments with different fingers.
- Consider using short pencils and fingers crayons to help to reinforce the use of fingers on writing instruments. [Watch this video](#) for more information on why!

Week 5: Drawing

Target: The child will attempt to draw animals and objects.

The week children are given the opportunity to try to draw animals and objects. These can be drawn with any writing instrument. Encourage children to colour the picture on the sheet and then try to draw their own.

Teaching tip:

- If children are struggling with drawing faces, or drawing a body which is separate to the head, tracing around their body and adding body parts can help to improve their spatial understanding.

Week 6: Crosses (+) and squares

Target: The child will imitate horizontal crosses (+) and square shapes.

This week will focus on intersecting lines and corners. These can be drawn with any writing instrument. It is recommended that large paper or an easel is available for children to stand at and make these shapes in addition to them being drawing them on paper.

Teaching tip:

- Crosses
 - If you have used 'standing' and 'sleeping' line references when teaching vertical and horizontal lines then a cross (+) is a standing line then a sleep line
 - Encourage starting at the top and crossing over from left to right
- Squares
 - The average age for being able to draw a square is four and a half years old. Be mindful that this target may be too difficult for younger children in your class and they may need to come back to this shape at a later date
 - A prompt for drawing a square is a standing line, a space, a standing line and then two sleeping lines to join them up

Weeks 7-10: Letters l t i j u y

Targets:

- The child can identify where straight letters start (i.e. at the top of letters).
- The child will be able to trace over ltijuy using the correct formation patterns.

The primary focus for this section of the programme is for children to be able to write the letters ltijuy by starting at the top. Use the song 'start at the top' and the stories to help to reinforce the concepts. The progression is deliberately slow to ensure that children are getting sufficient time to practise each letter. It is highly recommended the fine and gross motor activities are also included each week.

Teaching tip

- Reinforce the rule 'start at the top' in all lessons where the child is writing
- Reinforce 'crocodile fingers' at any time the child is holding a writing instrument incorrectly.

Stage 1 Terms 2 Weekly Targets

Weeks 11-12: Letters r n m h b p

Targets:

- The child can identify where letter family two starts and the main rule is 'no lifting' of their pencil when writing the letter.
- The child will be able to trace over rnmhpb without lifting their pencil.

The primary focus for this section of the programme is for children to be able to write the letters rnmhpb by starting at the top and completing the letter in one continuous pencil movement. Use the song 'no lifting' and the stories to help to reinforce the concepts. Please continue to add in the Crocodile Challenge fine motor activities each week.

Teaching tip

- Reinforce the rules 'start at the top' and 'no lifting' in all lessons where the child is writing
- Reinforce 'crocodile fingers' at any time the child is holding a writing instrument incorrectly

Weeks 13-17: Letters c o a d g q f s e**Targets:**

- The child can identify that letter family three starts like 'curly c'.
- The child will be able to trace over coadgqfse using the correct formation pattern.

This section focusses on the 'curly c' letter family. The focus is to help children to have these letters drawn with the correct orientation. Use the 'curly c' songs (part 1 and part 2) and the stories to help to reinforce the concepts. The letter 'd' is included over two week to help to reinforce the correct orientation of this letter. If the child 'starts like c' then they are less likely to reverse it. Please continue to add in the fine motor activities each week.

Teaching tip

- Reinforce the rules 'start at the top' and 'no lifting' and 'starts like curly c' (or 'baby curly c') in all lessons where the child is writing
- Reinforce 'crocodile fingers' at any time the child is holding a writing instrument incorrectly

Week 18: Oblique lines

Target: The child will imitate oblique lines and crosses (\ / x).

The focus of this week is for children to imitate oblique lines. These can be drawn with any writing instrument. It is recommended that large paper or an easel is available for children to stand at and make these shapes. It is highly recommended that the fine and gross motor activities are also included. There are optional zig zag lines as well.

Teaching tip:

- Calling these lines 'falling line' can help to distinguish them from 'standing and sleeping line'
- Consider the child's age, the average age a child can draw an oblique cross (x) is 4 years 11 months, so this target will be developmentally too high for some children in the class.
- If children are struggling to visually differentiate between straight (|) and oblique lines (/ \) please spend more time on the visual perception sheets.

Weeks 19-20: Letters w v x z k**Targets:**

- The child can identify that these letters have oblique (falling) lines.
- The child will be able to trace over wvxzk using the correct formation pattern.

Oblique lines, particularly the diamond corner required for the letter k are the hardest letters for children to learn perceptually. Use the Oblique song and the stories to help to reinforce the concepts. Please continue to add in the fine motor activities each week.

Teaching tip

- Reinforce all of the 'Write Rules' in any lessons that children are writing.
- Remember the child's age, half of children under the age of 5 will not have developed the perceptual ability to draw oblique crosses (x) or the diamond corner required for the letter k.

Stage 1 Term 3 Weekly Targets

Week 21: Writing my name

Target: The child will be able to write their name using a capital letter to start and correct letter formations for the other letters.

Teaching tip

- Reinforce the concepts each time the child writes their name in class.

Week 22: Letters l t i j u y

Targets:

- The child can identify which letter family ltijuy belong to and where their pencil should start when drawing them.
- The child will be able to write the letters ltijuy using the correct formation patterns and orientations in their literacy books.

These weeks review the letters ltijuy and the start at the top rule. Use the song 'start at the top' and the stories to help to reinforce the concepts. It is highly recommended the fine and gross motor activities are also included each week.

Teaching tip

- Reinforce the rule 'start at the top' in all lessons where the child is writing
- Reinforce 'crocodile fingers' at any time the child is holding a writing instrument incorrectly

Weeks 23-24: Letters r n m h b p

Targets:

- The child can identify which letter family rnmhpb belong to and where their pencil should start when drawing them.
- The child will write the letters rnmhpb using the correct formation patterns and orientations in their literacy books.

These weeks review the letters rnmhpb and the 'no lifting' rule. Use the song 'no lifting' and the stories to help to reinforce the concepts. Fine and gross motor activities can help to further develop children's skills.

Teaching tip

- Reinforce the rules 'start at the top' and 'no lifting' in all lessons where the child is writing
- Encourage children to 'stretch up tall' for h and b.

- If children are segmenting these letters, smaller group or 1:1 sessions could be considered to help to reinforce the rules.

Weeks 25-27: Letters c o a d g q f s e

Targets:

- The child can identify which letter family coadgqfse belong to and where their pencil should start when drawing them.
- The child will be able write the letters coadgqfse using the correct formation patterns and orientations in their literacy books.

This section reviews the 'curly c' letter family. Use the 'curly c' songs (part 1 and part 2) and the stories to help to reinforce the concepts. Please continue to add in the fine motor activities each week.

Teaching tip

- Reinforce the rules 'start at the top' and 'no lifting' and 'starts like curly c' (or 'baby curly c') in all lessons where the child is writing.
- If children are not starting these letters correctly, or reversing them, smaller group or 1:1 sessions could be considered to help to reinforce the rules.

Week 28: Letters w v x z k

Targets:

- The child can identify which letter family wvxzk belong to and where their pencil should start when drawing them.
- The child will be able to write wvxzk using the correct formation patterns and orientations in their literacy books.

Teaching tip

- Remember, younger children may still have difficulty with oblique lines due to their developmental readiness.
- If children need extra support with their obliques, revise the matching, oblique, triangle and zig zag worksheets.

Weeks 29-30: Writing sentences

Targets: The child can write short, 3-5 word, sentences in their book using the correct letter formations 80% of the time.

The final two weeks of this stage focus on sentence writing.

Teaching tip

- Reinforce all of the concepts learnt through the year.
- If a child is having difficulty with a particular letter, consider 1:1 support to focus on it.

Part 5 – Write Rules Stage 2

Write Rules: Learn to write the easy way.

Write Rules Stage 2 (UK Year 1)⁶

Stage 2 of Write Rules reinforces foundations learnt in Stage 1. All lower case letters are reviewed in the first twelve weeks. There is a focus on placement on the line and sizing. Capitals are covered in weeks 17-20. The final ten weeks reinforce spacing, size and punctuation.

The main aims of Stage 2 are for the child to learn to

1. Write all lower and uppercase letters with the correct orientation and letter formation pattern 90% of the time when writing in lessons.
2. Be able to identify and correct where they have made errors with their letter proportions and spacing in their work.

Please see Appendix B to see how Write Rules links with the UK national curriculum targets.

Stage 2 Targets

Term	Weeks	Targets
1	1-2	The child will hold their pencil with a tripod, quadruped or modified tripod grasp.
1-2	3-12	The child will write all lower case letters with the correct letter formations.
2	13-15	The child will begin to identify where different letters should sit on the line (e.g. tail letters go under the line).
	16-20	The child will start all capitals in the correct position (at the top).
3	21-25	The child will be able to identify where they have made errors with their letter proportions and spacing.
	26-30	The child will write all lower and uppercase letters with the correct orientation and letter formation pattern 90% of the time.

⁶ This stage may be relevant for different year groups in different countries. Please link the stages with your own national curriculum.

Stage 2 Weekly Focus

This table provides a summary of the weekly input. The **Stage 2 weekly planner** outlines the specific goals and resources required for each week of the programme.

Term 1	Term 2	Term 3
1. Crocodile Snap	11. vw	21. Spaces
2. Colouring	12. xzk	22. Punctuation
3. lti	13. Position on line – short	23. Exit flick
4. juy	14. Position on line – tall	24. Review sizing
5. rnm	15. Position on line - tail	25. Review sizing
6. hbp	16. Capitals – straight	26. Days of the week
7. coa	17. Capitals – curved 1	27. Words/sentences
8. dgq	18. Capitals – curved 2	28. Words/sentences
9. fse	19. Capitals – oblique 1	29. Words/sentences
10. Pencil control - sizing	20. Capitals – oblique 2	30. Words/sentences

Stage 2 Term 1 Weekly Targets

Week 1: Crocodile Snap

Target: The child can identify their ‘crocodile fingers’ or their thumb, index and middle fingers from the other fingers of their hand.

The focus of this week is the song Crocodile Snap. It should be included every day. Children should be familiar with Crocodile Snap from Stage 1 of the programme. This week should reinforce those concepts. Use the crocodile snap colouring sheets, letter colouring sheets and dot sheets from stage one week one can also be used as resources.

Teaching tip:

- Use the term ‘crocodile fingers’ if you see children holding their writing instruments with different fingers.
- Consider using short pencils and fingers crayons to help to reinforce the use of fingers on writing instruments.

Week 2: Pencil Control

Target: The child holds their pencil with tripod, modified tripod or quadruped grasp when colouring.

This week extends on week one and gives children more opportunities to use their ‘crocodile fingers’. There are dotted outline sheets of the colouring pages and the drawing sheets from stage one can also be used.

Teaching tip:

- If children are struggling to colour within the lines and to draw, they may need extra support, consider using additional strategies from the fine motor programme.

- If children are struggling with drawing animals and people, this could be included in art as a topic to give more opportunities to practise these skills.

Weeks 3-4: Letters l t i j u y

Targets:

- The child can identify which letter family ltijuy belong to and where their pencil should start when drawing them.
- The child will be able to write the letters ltijuy using the correct formation patterns and orientations in their literacy books.

These weeks review the letters ltijuy and the start at the top rule. Use the song 'start at the top' and the stories to help to reinforce the concepts. It is highly recommended the fine and gross motor activities are also included each week.

Teaching tip

- Reinforce the rule 'start at the top' in all lessons where the child is writing
- Reinforce 'crocodile fingers' at any time the child is holding a writing instrument incorrectly

Weeks 5-6: Letters r n m h b p

Targets:

- The child can identify which letter family rnmhpb belong to and where their pencil should start when drawing them.
- The child will to write the letters rnmhpb using the correct formation patterns and orientations in their literacy books.

These weeks review the letters rnmhpb and the 'no lifting' rule. Use the song 'no lifting' and the stories to help to reinforce the concepts. Fine and gross motor activities can help to further develop children's skills.

Teaching tip

- Reinforce the rules 'start at the top' and 'no lifting' in all lessons where the child is writing
- Encourage children to 'stretch up tall' for h and b.
- If children are segmenting these letters, smaller group or 1:1 sessions could be considered to help to reinforce the rules.

Weeks 7-9: Letters c o a d g q f s e

Targets:

- The child can identify which letter family coadgqfse belong to and where their pencil should start when drawing them.
- The child will be able write the letters coadgqfse using the correct formation patterns and orientations in their literacy books.

This section reviews the 'curly c' letter family. Use the 'curly c' songs (part 1 and part 2) and the stories to help to reinforce the concepts. Please continue to add in the fine motor activities each week.

Teaching tip

- Reinforce the rules 'start at the top' and 'no lifting' and 'starts like curly c' (or 'baby curly c') in all lessons where the child is writing.
- If children are not starting these letters correctly, or reversing them, smaller group or 1:1 sessions could be considered to help to reinforce the rules.

Week 10: Pencil control and sizing

Target: The child can make long and short sized lines and circles in their exercise book.

This week focusses on long and short sizing in exercise book lines. The aim is for children to start to identify the 'imaginary' middle line that they need to visualise when writing to make their letters the correct size.

Teaching tip

1. If children have found the dotted and shaded line sheets helpful, Morrell Handwriting has exercise books with the shaded lines in both narrow and wide lines. These could be a useful resource for children in literacy lessons. Available here:
<https://morrellshandwriting.co.uk/product/wide-lined-handwriting-exercise-book/>

Stage 2 Term 2 Weekly Targets

Weeks 11-12: Letters w v x z k**Targets:**

- The child can identify which letter family wvxzk belong to and where their pencil should start when drawing them.
- The child will be able to write wvxzk using the correct formation patterns and orientations in their literacy books.

At this stage, all children should be able to draw their oblique lines. Some children need an extra prompt to make their corners clean, especially where the two lines join together for k.

Teaching tip

- If children need extra support with their obliques, revise the matching, oblique, triangle and zig zag worksheets.

Weeks 13-15: Position on the line**Targets:**

- The child will be able to identify which lowercase letters are taller and which letters go under the line.

- The child will be able to write their lowercase letters with correct proportions in their literacy books.

Teaching tips:

- Reinforce the imaginary middle line.
- Use the Write Rules paper to reinforce if required.
- Reinforce, stretching up tall and under the line lyrics from the songs.

Weeks 16-20: Capital letters

Target: The child will be able to write all capital letters with correct proportions.

Teaching tips:

- If children are struggling with their diagonal lines, review the diagonal line worksheets.
- Prompt children to always stretch up tall for their capitals.

Stage 3 Term 3 Targets

Week 21: Spaces

Target: The child will leave correct spacing between their words 90% of the time.

Teaching tips:

- Use the stories to help
- Prompt finger spaces for right-handed children.
- Prompt stretching the fingers out after the last letter for left-handed children (it is very hard to use the right finger for spaces if you are left-handed, as it gets in the way of your writing). A wooden craft stick (lolly stick) can sometimes work as it is flatter.

Week 22: Punctuation

Target: The child will use a capital at the start and a full stop at the end of their sentences 90% of the time.

Teaching tips:

- Prompt children to always stretch up tall for their capitals.

Week 23: Exit flick

Target: The child will understand when they can use an exit flick on lower case letters a d h i l m n t u.

Teaching tips:

- Remind children that the 'flick' is very small.
- Ensure children are still starting the letters in the correct position.

Weeks 24-25: Letter sizing

Target: The child will write all letters on the line with correct proportions.

Teaching tips:

- Use the rules and stories to reinforce the letter proportions.
- Review the 'imagine the dotted line' story if needed.

Week 26: Days of the week

Target: The child will be able to write the days of the week with correct letter formations and sizing.

Weeks 27-30: Words/sentences

Target: The child will use correct letter formations and sizing 90% of the time when writing their own words and sentences.

Teaching tips:

- Use the rules and stories to reinforce the letter proportions.
- Prompt corrections in all written work.

Part 6 – Notes on Joining

Stage 3

Write Rules currently does not include Stage 3. If there is enough interest in the programme, we will add in Stage 3 which will focus on joined writing. As outlined in Part 1, children should be taught printing first. When teaching joins, it is helpful to also group letters into similar patterns. Stage 3 of the programme will group joins as follows

Exit flick

Stage 2 has begun to cover this. The exit flick is the easiest join to add.

a d h i l m n t u

Top Joins

The top join letters are the ones that children most frequently make errors in. It is helpful to teach them next, so that children are aware of them when they are practicing their other joins.

o v w

Straight entrance

The straight entrances are broken into two groups. The join on the first group is wider.

u y i j

b h k l m n p r t

Curly c entrance

These letters all have a curved entrance and then curl back around in a 'c' shape.

c a d g q s (f if top joining it)

Tail join

Not all schools choose to join the tail letters. This content will be included for those who wish to teach it.

g j y

Outliers

Aside from 'e' which, these letters are joined in different ways depending on the school.

e f k x z

References

Write Rules: Learn to write the easy way.

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4. Miskin, R (2006) *Read Write Inc* Information available here
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Additional Resources

Letter workbooks/sheets

- Morrel's Handwriting's handwriting books teach letters in formation orders, the order is slightly different to Write Rules but you could advise parents which letter/s the children are working on and they can use that page. <https://morrellshandwriting.co.uk> (Also available at WHSmith)
- Morrel's Handwriting also provides partly shaded lined exercise books, which are an excellent way to help children to understand letter proportions.
- Nelson Handwriting also links letter formation patterns together and has a series of books – available through Oxford Owl <https://home.oxfordowl.co.uk/>
- Twinkl has many pencil control and letter worksheets available. The layout of these is not always consistent (e.g. start/finish dot/line size) which can be confusing for some children. You may wish to stick to one style within their resources. Again, it is recommended that the Write Rules order is used for teacher letters. Therefore, Twinkl packs may need to be completed in a different order than they are printed (many packs are alphabetical). If you are using the 'robot arm', 'long ladder', 'curly caterpillar', and 'zig-zag' worksheets please also reinforce the Write Rules song rules!

Transitioning to joined

- Morrel Handwriting information - <https://morrellshandwriting.co.uk/>
- Nelson Handwriting information – Available through Oxford Owl <https://home.oxfordowl.co.uk/>

Appendix A – Song Lyrics

Write Rules: Learn to write the easy way.

Start at the Top (Family 1)

Lyrics: Kim Griffin, Music and Production: Joel Hopson

Start at the top
And go down
Start at the top
And turn around

Stretch up tall
And go down
Stretch up tall
Then turn around

Hands the left
Hands the right
Make some dots
With all your might

Start at the top
And go down
Start at the top
And turn around

Start at the top
Go to the ground
Make a curl
Then turn around

Let's write some letters!
On the stage with us today is
I t i j u y
I t i j u y
They all start at the top!
Then they go down
Are you ready? Let's go

I

Stretch up tall
And go down
I is tall
He's really high

t

Stretch up tall
And go down
Lift your pencil
Then go across

i

Start at the top
And go down
Lift your pencil
And make a dot

j

Start at the top
Go under the line
Curl around
Then make a dot

u

Start at the top
And go down
Curl up and over
Then come back down

y

Start at the top
And go down
Curl up and over
Then come back down
Keep going under the line
And curl around

Repeat initial verses

No Lifting (Family 2)

Lyrics: Kim Griffin, Music and Production: Patrick Savina

On the stage with us today is r n m p h b
Where do you all start?
At the top!
And what's the rule?
NO LIFTING!!
Are you ready? Let's go

To the top and down
To the top and down
To the top and down
No lifting

Take it to the ground
Take it to the ground
Take it to the ground
No lifting

Stretch up tall and down
Stretch up tall and down
Stretch up tall and down
No lifting

Take it up, take it down
Take it up, take it down
Take it up, take it down
No lifting

r
To the top and down
Take it up and curl
Now you've made an r
No Lifting

n
To the top and down
Take it up and start to curl
One bump makes a n
No Lifting

m

To the top and down

Take it up and start to curl

Two bumps makes a m

No Lifting

Repeat initial verses

p

To the top and to the ground

Take it up and start to curl

Go around and make a p

No lifting

h

Stretch up tall and down

Take it up and stop

One bump makes a h

No Lifting

b

Stretch up tall and down

Take it up and stop

Go around and make a b

No lifting

Repeat initial verses

Thanks for practicing with us today boys and girls. Next time you're writing

r n m p h b

Where do you all start?

At the top!

And what's the rule?

NO LIFTING!!

And remember p goes under the line and h and b stretch up tall.

Starts like 'c' – Part 1

Lyrics: Kim Griffin, Music and Production: Patrick Savina

c c c

c c c

Hands

Hands to the right

No not the middle

Stretch to the right

From the right

Take it round [Go around]

Make a c

A curly c

Hands

Hands to the right

No not the left

Stretch to the right

From the right

Take it round [Go around]

Make a c

A curly c

Who's on stage today? That's right

c c make a curly c

o o I start like curly c

a a I start like c

d d I start like curly c

g g I start like curly c

What's the rule?

What's the rule?

We start like curly c

Time for c

Stretch to right

Take it over to the left

And round and stop

Time for o

Stretch to the right

Make curly c

Keep going round join it up

Time for a
Stretch to the right
Make curly c keep going round
Then up and down

Let's do d
Make curly c
Keep going round
Stretch up tall down to the line

Time for g
Make curly c
Keep going round
Down past the line and make a curl

Repeat initial verses

Starts like 'c' – Part 2

Lyrics: Kim Griffin, Music and Production: Patrick Savina

c c c

c c c

Hands

Hands to the right

No not the middle

Stretch to the right

From the right

Take it round [Go around]

Make a c

A curly c

Hands

Hands to the right

No not the left

Stretch to the right

From the right

Take it round [Go around]

Make a c

A curly c

Who's on stage today?

c c make a curly c

q q I start like curly c

f f make a baby curly c

s s make a baby curly c

g g I start like curly c

Hold on a minute. You don't start like curly c! What are you doing here!

Yes, that's right, I'm here to let you in on a secret. You're right, I don't start like curly c. But if you have a look closely - I end like curly c!

What!

Across and curly c

Across and curly c

Across and curly c See!

Oh yeah!

I end like curly c

Time for c

Stretch to right

Take it over to the left

And round and stop

Time for q
Make curly c
Keep going round
Down past the line
And make a flick

Let's do f
Stretch up tall
Bbbaby curly c
Down to the line
Lift and cross

Let's do s
Start in the middle
Bbbbaby curly c
Change direction
Slide on the line

Let's do e
Start in the middle
Go across
Make a c
A curly c
(Ends like c curly c)

Repeat initial verses

Let's Fall

Lyrics: Kim Griffin, Music and Production: Joel Hopson

Body straight
Fall to the right
Fall to the left
And turn around

Hands go straight
Hands fall in
Hands fall out
Jump up and down

Body straight
Hips to the right
Hips to the left
And turn around

Legs go straight
Legs fall in
Legs fall out
And touch the ground

Body straight
Fall to the right
Fall to the left
And turn around

On the stage with us today is
It's v - my lines fall out
And w - just make two vs
And z - fall to the side
And x I make a cross
Kicking k

v
To the left
Fall down
Fall up
And you're done

w

To the left

Fall down

Fall up

Then down and up

z

To the left

Go across

Gall down

Go across

x

Fall down

And lift

Move up

Fall down

k

Stretch up tall

Down and lift

Out to the right

Fall in and fall out

Repeat initial verse

Appendix B - Write Rules & England National Curriculum

Write Rules: Learn to write the easy way.

Early Years Targets – Reception Children⁷

ELG: Fine Motor Skills

Target	Write Rules resources
Hold a pencil effectively in preparation for fluent writing – using the tripod grip in almost all cases.*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crocodile Snap song • Supporting Pencil Grasp Development fine motor activities • Worksheets
Use a range of small tools, including scissors, paint brushes and cutlery.	If children need further ideas for this please see Supporting Scissor Skills or the Fine Motor Programme sections which come with Write Rules.
Begin to show accuracy and care when drawing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Colouring and drawing worksheets

* Research has shown that both a quadruped grasp and modified tripod grasp are also effective grasps. These grasps are explored further in training video xx.

ELG: Writing

Target	Write Rules resources
Write recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed.	This is the core focus of the programme. There are songs, worksheets, stories and games to encourage this.
Spell words by identifying sounds in them and representing the sounds with a letter or letters;	Spelling is not a core focus of Write Rules. The worksheets can be used to support phonics and common words. It is expected that sound identification will be primarily covered in phonics lessons.
Write simple phrases and sentences that can be read by others.	<p>There are opportunities to write sentences included within the worksheets.</p> <p>Staff should also encourage the use of the 'Write Rules' rules when children are writing.</p>

⁷ Reference: Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage: Setting the standards for learning, development and care for children from birth to five. Published: 31 March 2021 Effective: 1 September 2021 Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-framework--2>

Year 1 – UK National Curriculum⁸

Writing Targets

Target	Write Rules resources
Sit correctly at a table, holding a pencil comfortably and correctly.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crocodile Snap • Fine motor activities • Lucy movement videos
<p>Begin to form lower-case letters in the correct direction, starting and finishing in the right place.</p> <p>Form capital letters.</p>	<p>This is the core focus of the programme. Resources include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Songs • Worksheets • Stories • Games <p>Our songs encourage the physical movements children need to make to write letters and these prompts should be used by teachers in literacy lessons.</p>
Form digits 0-9.	This is on the road map. Numbers 0-20 will be included to link with the Maths curriculum goal, which contradicts the literacy one.
Understand which letters belong to which handwriting 'families' (i.e. letters that are formed in similar ways) and to practise these.	This is a core focus of Write Rules. All letters are taught together in letter families with clear prompts explaining why.

Literacy Targets

Target	Write Rules resources
<p>Pupils should be taught to spell:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • words containing each of the 40+ phonemes already taught • common exception words • the days of the week. 	Spelling is not a core focus of write rules; however our worksheets include words. There are also worksheets for the common exception words and the days of the week to support the National Curriculum targets.
<p>Name the letters of the alphabet:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • naming the letters of the alphabet in order • using letter names to distinguish between alternative spellings of the same sounds. 	There are stories to reinforce the naming of letters in alphabetical order and naming both letter name and sound.
<p>Pupils should be taught to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • leave spaces between words • begin to punctuate sentences using a capital letter and a full stop, question • mark or exclamation mark • use a capital letter for names of people, places, the days of the week, and the personal pronoun 'I'. 	There are stories which cover all of the concepts. We recommend that the letter formation rules taught in Write Rules are reinforced by teachers during all literacy lessons.

⁸ Reference: The national curriculum in England Framework document. December 2014. Available: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-curriculum-in-england-framework-for-key-stages-1-to-4>

Years 2-6 – UK Writing Targets

Year 2

Target	Write Rules resources
Form lower-case letters of the correct size relative to one another	These concepts are embedded into the programme in all resources.
Start using some of the diagonal and horizontal strokes needed to join letters and understand which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left unjoined.	This is on the roadmap, we firmly believe in a print first approach so want to get that right first. If we are successful, then we will add in cursive for September 2023.
Write capital letters and digits of the correct size, orientation and relationship to one another and to lower case letters.	These concepts are embedded into the programme in all resources.
Use spacing between words that reflects the size of the letters.	These concepts are embedded into the programme in all resources.

Years 3 & 4

Target	Write Rules resources
Form lower-case letters of the correct size relative to one another	These concepts are embedded into the programme in all resources.
Use the diagonal and horizontal strokes that are needed to join letters and understand which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left unjoined.	This is on the roadmap, we firmly believe in a print first approach so want to get that right first. If we are successful, then we will add in cursive for September 2023.
Increase the legibility, consistency and quality of their handwriting [for example, by ensuring that the downstrokes of letters are parallel and equidistant; that lines of writing are spaced sufficiently so that the ascenders and descenders of letters do not touch].	These concepts are embedded into the programme in all resources. Our goal is that by teaching them at the start, they will translate into legible, consistent and high quality handwriting in Years 3 and 4.

Years 5&6

Target	Write Rules resources
Write legibly, fluently and with increasing speed by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - choosing which shape of a letter to use when given choices and deciding whether or not to join specific letters 	These concepts are embedded into the programme in all resources.
Choosing the writing implement that is best suited for a task.	Please read Kim's article on pen vs pencil and why we advocate for student choice (and removal of the pen licence system!).